GOAL #1 Attract and graduate high-quality students

A. Strengths

- Our **Direct Admit program** allows us to recruit students with a higher high school GPA and test scores than pre-journalism students. Our direct admit student enrollment has increased 155% in the past six years. Preliminary research suggests that our direct admit students have a higher retention rate than our pre-journalism students.
- **Journalism 101** is a large introductory survey class that also serves to recruit new students to the program.
- We’ve completely revamped our **SOJ website** as a marketing and recruiting tool.
- Our **West Virginia High School Journalism Competition** attracts the best and brightest journalism students in the state. In 2005-2006, we’ve expanded the competition to include schools from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland and Virginia.
- We’ve developed **new marketing materials**, including a recruitment video.
- We offer students a **hands-on curriculum, personalized attention** and opportunities to participate in **immersion journalism projects** that give students the opportunity to do professional work for real-world clients.

B. Challenges

- We face regional **competition** from other journalism programs, such as Ohio University that runs a well-established summer high-school journalism program. In addition, Marshall University has just moved its journalism program into a new building.
- **High school journalism in WV is on the decline** because of block scheduling and No-Child Left-Behind mandates.
- West Virginia faces a **decline in the high school population**.

C. Opportunities

- We should **actively recruit in Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania**, since we face little competition that market.
- We could create a **summer high school journalism boot camp**, to compete with Ohio University and generate excitement for our program across the region.
- **Scholarships could be used as a recruiting tool.** The School could offer substantial packages to freshman “stars,” versus giving smaller awards to everyone who meets our minimum standards.
- We could **create packages** to attract high performing students, such as a 5-year Master’s program.

GOAL #2 Recruit and Retain High Faculty Committed to the Land Grant Mission

A. Strengths

- We are a small school in a large university, in which **faculty have input** on decisions that impact the school.
- **Faculty are encouraged and supported** in their research and creative efforts.
• Faculty are given autonomy to teach their classes and make their schedules.
• Most faculty teach a majority of small classes.
• Faculty and students work together on immersion journalism projects that have an audience and an impact. These projects can also result in promotable work.
• Faculty are given support to attend academic and professional conferences.
• Faculty receive timely technical and administrative support from staff.
• Faculty are able to work with up-to-date instructional technology.

B. Challenges
• Faculty Salaries remain below the national average
• Our faculty to student ratio is high, and faculty carry a large teaching/advising and service load.
• The university lacks the same national reputation as other institutions.
• The school lacks a doctoral program.

C. Opportunities
• The School can seek additional enhanced/endowed professorships to attract and retain the best and brightest faculty.
• The School can work with Central Administration to support new faculty lines in response to growing enrollment and productivity.
• We could move towards group advising, to reduce the advising burden for individual faculty, freeing up faculty to do more research and innovative teaching.
• We could use our Extended Learning revenues to update technology and offer research support/release time for productive faculty.
• We should market our (non-financial) strengths to prospective faculty.
• Faculty should be encouraged to participate and present at national academic/professional conferences.

GOAL #3 Enhance the Educational Environment for Students

A. Strengths
• The school and institution have made significant investments in technology and capital improvements, including the purchase of new computers and software, renovations to the computer labs, Room 205 and the former TV studio, and the purchase of digital photography and broadcast equipment.
• The school emphasizes experiential learning. As part of their course work, students produce real work for real clients. Hands-on courses include: the newspaper bureau class, in which students write stories for WV and regional daily newspapers and the TV bureau class, in which students produce stories for KDKA News.
• The school is engaged in convergence journalism projects that give students invaluable opportunities to work in a variety of media doing long-form journalism that has impact and an audience. Such projects include the Cancer Stories book and documentary, the West Virginia Veterans History Project, and Surviving the Storm—an interactive website showcasing students’ writing, photography, broadcast and multimedia reporting of Katrina evacuees in West Virginia.
• The school’s faculty includes experienced professionals, who continue to practice what they teach. The faculty have received university, regional and national teaching awards.
B. Challenges

- It is expensive to maintain and replace technology, particularly as formats change.
- With our growing enrollment and growing reliance on technology, we need a full-time technology support staff person, with knowledge of media programs.
- With our growing enrollment and new programs, we are running out of space in Martin Hall for additional instruction space and faculty offices.
- The high student to faculty ratio makes it difficult for teachers to spend quality time with students in and out of the classroom. In a small school, faculty have many demands on their time.

C. Opportunities

- The school can seek additional private support (individual, foundation and corporate) to underwrite improvements in technology and renovations.
- The school can better utilize the space in Martin Hall to create a study space/lounge for students, and additional offices.
- The school can further develop its convergence curricula, to include more integration between the sequences, such as a course in visual journalism that will cut across the separate disciplines.
- The School could provide more incentives to professors for teaching innovation, such as awards, additional money, and course reductions.
- We can more effectively market our capstone courses, which offer students real world experience and professional opportunities.
- The school could use its journalism fee/EL revenues to hire a full-time technology support person.

GOAL #4 Promote Discovery and Exchange of Knowledge and Ideas

A. Strengths

- Our online IMC Master’s Program is innovative and cutting edge, providing working professionals with a quality education in a new discipline.
- Our productive faculty conduct academic research and creative activity.
- Faculty and students work together on high-profile immersion journalism projects, such as the Cancer Project, Veteran’s Project and Katrina Project.

B. Challenges

- The school lacks a doctoral program, which could generate additional research and grant opportunities.
- The School’s on-campus Master’s program lacks faculty resources, a distinct curriculum and a clear focus.
- With a few exceptions, the school does not emphasize cross-disciplinary research, perhaps missing opportunities to partner with other units on campus.
- A high faculty-to-student ratio makes it difficult for faculty to take the extra time to work with students on research projects.
• The school lacks a full-time development person, who could help locate funding and write research grants.

C. Opportunities

• With additional support, the school’s on-campus Master’s program could be developed and enhanced to become of the school’s strengths.
• With additional support, the School could build on the success of IMC program, to develop other online Master’s programs, such as Masters in Health Communications.
• The school could use its Extended Learning revenues to provide research support and release time for productive faculty. The school needs to continue to be entrepreneurial.
• The school could also use its Extended Learning Revenues to hire a grant writer either part- or full-time.
• The school could partner with colleges that do get research dollars, such as medicine and engineering, to develop interdisciplinary research projects.

Goal #5 Improve West Virginia’s Health, Economy & Quality of Life

A. Strengths

• The school has engaged in immersion journalism and service-learning projects that benefit the citizens of the state, such as the Cancer Project, and Veterans Project.
• The school provides outreach to news organizations statewide. Faculty conduct professional development seminars for reporters, editors and photographers.
• Students in the graduate course in Health Public Relations conduct PR campaigns for non-profit groups, promoting health and wellness in the region.
• The school has a history of training students to produce community-oriented journalism and initiated several community journalism projects, such as the Compass newspaper in Scotts Run.

B. Challenges

• The school lacks resources to donate considerable time/equipment to local news organizations and other community groups.
• The school lacks a grant-writer to develop funding to support outreach efforts.
• The school does not reach out to other units on campus that have grants for health projects with a communications/information component.

C. Opportunities

• The school could collaborate with other units on campus to add a communications component to their grant-funded health projects.
• The school could seek funding from national/regional media organizations (WVPA and WVBA) to support outreach to state news organizations.
• The school could use EL funds/Institutional funds to hire a grant writer.